

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 5, 7, 10 and 12 as shown below, in which deleted terms are indicated with strikethrough and/or double brackets, and added terms are indicated with underscoring. Please cancel claims 4, 9 and 17 without prejudice and without abandonment of the subject matter thereof. The following list of claims replaces all previous versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) An electronic key system for a vehicle including a controller mounted in the vehicle and a portable transceiver carried by a user of the vehicle,

the vehicle comprising a locking unit which locks the vehicle so that use of the vehicle is not possible until a lock release command is received, and

wherein the controller comprises:

a transmission circuit that outputs a request signal to the portable transceiver;

a receiving circuit that receives a request signal from the portable transceiver;

a transmitter that outputs ~~a~~the request signal to the portable transceiver in response to an ON operation of a predetermined switch via the transmission circuit, the predetermined switch being previously determined from among a plurality of switches positioned in the vicinity of the user when the user boards the vehicle;

a receiver which receives an acknowledgement signal via the receiving circuit, the acknowledgement signal being outputted from the portable transceiver in response to the request signal from the transmitter, ~~from the portable transceiver;~~

a drive unit which, when the acknowledgement signal is compared and judged to be a request from the user, outputs a lock release command to the locking unit;

an interrupting unit which interrupts, if the vehicle is not started for a specified period of time, a supply of power to ~~a~~the transmission circuit and ~~a~~the receiving circuit, inside the controller, ~~that perform communication, the transmission circuit outputting the request signal to the portable transceiver, the receiving circuit receiving the acknowledgement signal, in response to the request signal, from the portable transceiver;~~ and

an interrupting unit controller which permits a switching unit to supply power to the transmission circuit and the receiving circuit in response to an ON operation of the predetermined switch among the plurality of switches positioned in the vicinity of the user when the user boards the vehicle,

wherein a switch for detecting that the user has boarded the vehicle is included as one of the plurality of switches.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Previously presented) The electronic key system for a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of switches are operational switches used for starting the engine of the vehicle, providing safety during travel, and stopping the vehicle.

4. (Canceled).

5. (Currently amended) An electronic key system for a vehicle comprising a controller mounted in the vehicle and a portable transmitter carried by a user of the vehicle,

the vehicle containing a locking unit which locks the vehicle so that the vehicle cannot be

used until a lock release command is received,

the portable transmitter comprising a transmitter unit that outputs a request signal to the controller in response to an operation input by the user, and

wherein the controller comprises:

a receiving circuit that receives a request signal from the portable transmitter;

a receiver which receives ~~a~~the request signal from the portable transmitter in response to an ON operation of a predetermined switch via the receiving circuit, the predetermined switch being previously identified from among a plurality of switches positioned in the vicinity of the user when the user boards the vehicle;

a drive unit which outputs a lock release command to the locking unit when the request signal is compared and judged to be a request from the user;

an interrupting unit which interrupts, if the vehicle is not started for a specified period of time, a supply of power to ~~a~~the receiving circuit inside the controller,~~that performs communication and which receives the request signal from the portable transmitter;~~ and

an interrupting unit controller which permits the interrupting unit to provide power to the receiving circuit in response to an ON operation of the predetermined switch among the plurality of switches positioned in the vicinity of the user when the user boards the vehicle,

wherein a switch for detecting that the user has boarded the vehicle is included as one of the plurality of switches.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently amended) An electronic key system for a vehicle comprising a controller

mounted in the vehicle and a portable transmitter carried by a user of the vehicle,

the vehicle containing a locking unit which locks the vehicle so that the vehicle cannot be used until a lock release command is received,

the portable transmitter comprising a transmitter unit that outputs a request signal to the controller in response to operation input by the user, and

wherein the controller comprises:

a receiving circuit that receives a request signal from the portable transmitter;

a receiver which receives ~~a~~the request signal from the portable transmitter in response to an ON operation of a predetermined switch via the receiving circuit, the predetermined switch being previously identified from among a plurality of switches positioned in the vicinity of the user when the user boards the vehicle;

a drive unit which outputs a lock release command to the locking unit when the request signal is compared and judged to be a request from the user;

a switching unit which permits an intermittent supply of power to be provided to ~~a~~the receiving circuit inside the controller, ~~that performs communication and which receives the request signal from the portable transmitter,~~ if the vehicle is not started for a predetermined period of time; and

a switching unit controller which permits the switching unit to provide a normal supply of power to the receiving circuit in response to ON operation of the predetermined switch when the user boards the vehicle,

wherein a switch for detecting that the user has boarded the vehicle is included as one of the plurality of switches.

8. (Previously presented) The electronic key system for a vehicle according to claim 5, wherein the plurality of switches are operational switches used for starting the engine of the vehicle, providing safety during travel, and stopping the vehicle.

9. (Canceled).

10. (Currently amended) An electronic key system for a vehicle including a controller mounted in the vehicle and a portable transceiver carried by a user of the vehicle,

the vehicle comprising a locking unit which locks the vehicle so that use of the vehicle is not possible until a lock release command is received, and

wherein the controller comprises:

a transmission circuit that outputs a request signal to the portable transceiver;

a receiving circuit that receives a request signal from the portable transceiver;

a transmitter that outputs ~~a~~the request signal to the portable transceiver in response to an ON operation of a switch via the transmission circuit, the switch being selectable from among a plurality of switches positioned in the vicinity of the user when the user boards the vehicle;

a receiver which receives an acknowledgement signal via the receiving circuit, the acknowledgement signal being outputted from the portable transceiver in response to the request signal from the transmitter, ~~from the portable transceiver;~~

a drive unit which, when the acknowledgement signal is compared and judged to be a request from the user, outputs a lock release command to the locking unit;

an interrupting unit which prevents, if the vehicle is not started for a specified period of time, the supply of power to ~~a~~the transmission circuit and ~~a~~the receiving circuit, inside the

~~controller, that perform communication, the transmission circuit outputting the request signal to the portable transceiver, the receiving circuit receiving the acknowledgement signal, in response to the request signal, from the portable transceiver; and~~

an interrupting unit controller which permits the interrupting unit to provide power to the transmission circuit and the receiving circuit in response to an ON operation of the switch when the user boards the vehicle,

wherein a switch for detecting that the user has boarded the vehicle is included as one of the plurality of switches.

11. (Canceled).

12. (Currently amended) The electronic key system for a vehicle according to claim 10, further comprising:

a switching unit which permits an intermittent supply of power to be provided to the transmission circuit and the receiving circuit, inside the controller, that perform communication if the vehicle is not started for a specified period of time; and

a switching unit controller which permits the switching unit to provide a normal supply of power to the transmission circuit and the receiving circuit in response to the ON operation of the switch when the user boards the vehicle.

13. (Previously presented) The electronic key system for a vehicle according to claim 10 wherein the switch is located at an approximate center of the vehicle.

14. (Previously presented) The electronic key system for a vehicle according to claim 10 wherein the switch is selected from the group comprising a lighting dimmer switch, a clutch switch, an indicator switch, a horn switch, and a brake switch.

15. (Previously presented) The electronic key system for a vehicle according to claim 10 wherein the switch is located on a steering mechanism of the vehicle.

16. (Previously presented) The electronic key system for a vehicle according to claim 7, wherein the plurality of switches are operational switches used for starting the engine of the vehicle, providing safety during travel, and stopping the vehicle.

17. (Canceled).